

on combating terrorism, and so hard-headed in trying to track American tourists down and slap them with a fine.

This notion of trying to slap Fidel Castro around by injuring the rights of the American people ought to stop. It does not hurt Fidel Castro that we have told the American people you cannot travel in Cuba. You can travel in Communist China. You can travel in Communist Vietnam. But you cannot travel in Communist Cuba. If we spend all this money on TV and Radio Marti in order to put voices in Cuba over television and radio, to give them another voice other than Fidel Castro, what sense does it make to say to the American people that traveling to Cuba so that Cubans hear other voices is somehow not worthy, but putting up an expensive radio and television station so the Cubans hear other voices is worthy?

The Europeans, the Canadians, and others, have used much more common sense than we have on this issue. And the President, rather than making things better, is making it much worse. I have no trust for Fidel Castro. I want him removed. I think the Cuban people ought to be free to choose their own government. But neither do I have any sympathy for a public policy that is so devoid of common sense, and it is getting worse every day, and was made worse yesterday by this President's announcement.

POLICIES ON OUR INDIAN RESERVATIONS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, my colleague is here to speak, but I do want to make another comment about the health care policies on our Indian reservations, an important concern.

I want to first say that we have to, in my judgment, deal with these issues in a manner that we have not previously done. On our Indian reservations in this country, in most cases, we have conditions that reflect Third World countries. We have four Indian reservations in my State of North Dakota.

American Indians today have a life expectancy that is 6 years less than all the rest of the American people. Their rate of alcoholism is seven times the rate of the rest of the American people. Their rate of tuberculosis is over seven times the rate of the rest of the American people. Their rate of diabetes is four times the rate of the rest of the American people. For accidents, there are nearly triple the fatalities on reservations. For suicides, the rate is twice that of the rest of the American people. For homicides, the rate is more than double the rest of the American people.

The fact is, we have a very serious problem on these Indian reservations. There is, in my judgment, despair and little hope. A young girl named Tamara Demaris, some years ago, was put in a foster home by a social worker who was handling 150 cases. She did not

have time to investigate the home. At that home, there was a drunken party, and little Tamara was beaten severely. Her hair was pulled out at the roots. Her nose was broken. Her arm was broken. That little girl will probably never get over the scars of that terrible beating.

That situation has changed. There is no longer one social worker with 150 cases. We now inspect and investigate where a three year-old child will be placed. But that is the kind of circumstance that happened because the resources did not exist. We were supposed to protect that child and we did not. I am talking about our society—yes, our society.

I will give you another example. The child in this picture died a few weeks ago. This young child's name is Avis. Avis missed 90 days of school this school year. She stayed in bed for many days curled up in a ball. She desperately needed help. All of her actions cried out for help. Avis, by all accounts, was a young girl who loved to ride horses, loved animals, and loved her family. But several weeks ago, Avis died. On that reservation, they had one psychologist, one social worker, and no automobile to take anybody to seek treatment. So when you talk to the relatives and the people whose lives intersected with this young girl named Avis, you understand the tragedy of her situation. Avis needed help and didn't get it. At a critical time in the life of this young 14-year-old girl, she didn't get the help she needed.

The Indian Health Service budget for this year recommends cutting back on mental health services provided on these reservations. There is not enough as it is. It is painfully thin in terms of the amount of resources.

The federal government has direct responsibility for the health care of several groups of people in this country, including Federal prisoners and American Indians. We protect American Indians, and we have a trust responsibility for their health care. With respect to Federal prisoners, it is our obligation. We spend almost twice as much money per person on health care for Federal prisoners as we do for American Indians. The result is that wonderful young people such as Avis lose their lives. It should not happen.

I wish to mention one other thing and then I will conclude. While there is great despair about these issues—and we must confront them this year—there are some areas of hope.

The one area of hope, in my judgment, is tribal colleges on reservations. The stepladder up and out to opportunity is education.

I want to read something I have read before on the floor, because last year we made enormous progress in increasing the funding for tribal colleges around the country. I want to read from a letter from a woman I know named Loretta.

She says this:

I grew up poor and considered backward by non-Indians. My home was a two-room log

house in a place called the "bush" on North Dakota's Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation. I stuttered. I was painfully shy. My clothes were hand-me-downs. I was like thousands of other Indian kids growing up on reservations across America.

When I went to elementary school I felt so alone and different. I couldn't speak up for myself. My teachers had no appreciation for Indian culture. I'll never forget that it was the lighter-skinned children who were treated better. They were usually from families that were better off than mine. My teachers called me savage. Even as a young child I wondered . . . What does it take to be noticed and looked upon the way these other children are?

By the time I reached 7th grade I realized that if my life was going to change for the better, I was going to have to do it. Nobody else could do it for me. That's when the dream began. I thought of ways to change things for the better—not only for myself but for my people. I dreamed of growing up to be a teacher in a school where every child was treated as sacred and viewed positively, even if they were poor and dirty. I didn't want any child to be made to feel like I did. But I didn't know how hard it would be to reach the realization of my dream. I almost didn't make it.

By the time I was 17 I had dropped out of school, moved to California, and had a child. I thought my life was over. But when I moved back to the reservation I made a discovery that literally put my life back together. My sisters were attending Turtle Mountain College, which had just been started on my reservation. I thought that was something I could do, too, so I enrolled. In those days, we didn't even have a campus. There was no building. Some classes met at a local alcohol rehabilitation center in an old hospital building that had been condemned. But to me, it didn't matter. I was just amazed I could go to college. It was life-changing.

My college friends and professors were like family. For the first time in my life I learned about the language, history and culture of my people in a formal education setting. I felt honor and pride begin to well up inside me. This was so unlike my prior school experience where I was told my language and culture were shameful and that Indians weren't equal to others. Attending a tribal college caused me to reach into my inner self to become what I was meant to be—to fight for my rights and not remain a victim of circumstance or of anybody. In fact, I loved college so much that I couldn't stop! I had a dream to fulfill . . . or perhaps some would call it an obsession. This pushed me on to complete my studies at Turtle Mountain College and to ultimately earn a Doctorate in Education Administration from the University of North Dakota.

I've worked in education ever since, from Head Start teacher's aide to college professor. Now I'm realizing my dream of helping Indian children succeed. I am the Office of Indian Education Programs' superintendent working with nine schools, three reservations, and I oversee two educational contracts with two tribal colleges. My life would not have turned out this way were it not for the tribal college on my reservation.

My situation is not unique and others feel this way as well. Since 1974, when Turtle Mountain College was chartered by the Turtle Mountain tribe, around 300 students have gone on to earn higher degrees. We now have educators, attorneys, doctors and others who have returned to the reservation. They—I should say, we—are giving back to the community. Instead of asking people to have pity on us because of what happened in our past, we are taking our future into our own

hands. Instead of looking for someone else to solve our problems, we are doing it.

There's only one thing tribal colleges need. With more funding, the colleges can do ever more than they've already achieved. We will take people off the welfare rolls and end the economic depression on reservations. Tribal colleges have already been successful with much less than any other institutions of higher education have received. That is why I hope you will continue to support the American Indian College Fund.

I'm an old timer. The College Fund didn't exist when I was a student. I remember seeing ads for the United Negro College Fund and wishing that such a fund existed for Indian people. We now have our own Fund that is spreading the message about tribal colleges and providing scholarships. I'm so pleased. I believe the Creator meant for this to be. But so much more must be done. There still isn't enough scholarship money available to carry students full time. That is my new dream . . . to see the day when Indian students can receive four-year scholarships so they don't have to go through the extremely difficult struggle many now experience to get their education.

I hope you'll keep giving, keep supporting the College Fund, so that some day this dream becomes reality. I know it can happen because if my dream for my future came true, anything is possible. Thank you.

This wonderful woman describes hope and opportunity through education and achievement. Her letter proves that when we invest in the right things, when we care enough to give people the opportunity to step up and out of poverty and despair, toward hope and opportunity, then this is a better country for them and for all of us as well. That should be true with respect to our investment in the Indian Health Service. It is true with our respect to investment in tribal colleges. We must do much better as we approach these subjects this year. I will have more to say about the Indian Health Service later.

I make the point that health care funding for American Indians is an issue, as we turn to the appropriations process, to which we must pay attention.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Will the Chair state the current parliamentary situation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is in morning business. Each Senator is permitted to speak up to 10 minutes.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I thank my friend from North Dakota on both subjects he just addressed. First, the American policy toward Cuba.

For the life of me, I cannot understand why the U.S. Treasury Department, as the Senator so clearly explained, devotes 80 percent of its financing resources—that is, investigating financing—to tracking down American tourists who travel to Cuba, rather than Osama bin Laden's terrorist network. It is amazing.

I have gone to Cuba a couple times with Montana businessmen. We signed a contract to sell agricultural products to Cuba.

If more Americans could travel to Cuba, it would be more likely that we

would be able to have a much better relationship with that country than we now have.

Frankly, I also believe very strongly that the current U.S. position with respect to Cuba—namely, prohibiting most Americans from traveling to Cuba—and the export embargo the U.S. Government has against Cuba helps Fidel Castro. It is something he uses to rail against Americans. Ironically, if the embargo was lifted and the travel ban was lifted, if we were not investigating Americans going to Cuba, it would hasten the day for democracy in Cuba. It is clear to me that is what would happen.

You might ask, Why is the American Government taking such an inane view, with most of its resources tracking down good, law-abiding Americans visiting Cuba, rather than trying to track down Osama bin Laden and his network? The answer is simple. It is basically politics. This administration is being ruled by a community in the U.S. that wants to get back at Cuba. I think it is regrettable that the Government would not adopt a policy that is good for all America, but rather one that just helps the interests of a very small group in southern Florida. It is an outrage. I, frankly, think the administration should be serving all of America and the Treasury Department should be devoting its resources to finding terrorists rather than checking up on American tourists traveling in Cuba.

The second subject the Senator talked about needs to be addressed over and over again; it is the abominable plight and economic conditions on America's Indian reservations. The Senator from North Dakota mentioned poverty in many reservations in North Dakota. The same can be said for many reservations throughout the country. In Montana, we have several reservations and the conditions are, in some cases, just as bad. In other areas, it is getting a lot better. Fifty percent of all the welfare cases, TANF cases, are on Indian reservations. We have an obligation to address that in a solid and constructive way.

I wish to explain a few of the positions in the bill that will be before us. It is not before the Senate at the immediate time, but we have considered the bill over the last week, the JOBS bill.

Some of the provisions in that bill relate to helping people who live on Indian reservations to live a much better life. These are provisions to help build schools, provisions to help create good jobs on the reservations, and provisions to keep businesses investing on reservations.

Let me explain a couple of them. First, the JOBS bill includes the extension of two provisions which allow tribes to issue tax-exempt bonds to build facilities just like the authority that State and local governments have. We believe, those of us who wrote the JOBS bill, treating tribes like State

governments makes good economic sense; that it is just plain fair and it is the right thing to do. If State and local governments can issue tax-exempt bonds to construct facilities, so should reservations. I am glad we have that provision in the JOBS bill.

It also includes a special allocation of what is called new markets tax credits for reservations. This provision allocates \$50 million in new markets tax credits where poverty rates exceed 40 percent. The new markets tax credits are designed to spur investment in economically depressed areas. They are not going to solve all the problems that exist on reservations but they are certainly going to help, help bring jobs, help businesses, help spirit entrepreneurship that is so needed around our country.

This allocation will apply to only the poorest reservations. Lifting these reservations out of the grip of poverty is a moral obligation that all of us in the Senate have.

Finally, the JOBS bill addresses school construction on reservations. Education is the key to success in many areas of the country. Many of the jobs we hear about going overseas would probably not go overseas if there were more than high school diplomas and better education in America.

We have good education but it has to be much better. Without properly educated citizens, we cannot compete in the 21st century.

Many of the schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs are woefully dilapidated and often dangerous, literally dangerous for students and teachers. The Bureau of Indian Affairs schools are in generally poorer physical condition and have a much more unsatisfactory environment, and more often lack key facilities requirements for education reform, and are less able to support computer and communications technology. The Bureau of Indian Affairs schools are that bad.

The JOBS bill includes a provision that will allow tribes to issue tax credit bonds to raise funds for construction, rehabilitation, or repair of tribal school facilities funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This provision gives hope to children stuck in third-rate schools. Every child deserves a decent place to go to school. This provision, again in the JOBS bill, will help tribes to raise the funds necessary to provide them.

This bill will also bring opportunity to all Americans, an opportunity for jobs training, and entrepreneurship, and I am proud the JOBS bill also includes provisions aimed at bringing opportunity to reservations and tribal communities across the country.

A provision I did not really explain in sufficient detail has to do with an employment credit that gives employers a payroll tax offset for hiring people on reservations, that would allow jobs to stay on reservations. In addition, the JOBS bill includes an extension of accelerated depreciation for equipment

purchased by businesses that are located on reservations. This is a huge benefit for small businesses on reservations and gives these businesses the incentives they need to expand.

The JOBS bill also includes several new provisions to give an economic lift to tribes. Many tribes have difficulty raising capital in order to attract convention centers which work attract tourists to reservations. Unlike State and local governments, as I mentioned earlier, tribes do not issue bonds for many infrastructure investments.

I spoke earlier about that provision and wanted to restate that the basic provisions allow tribes to issue tax exempt bonds to build facilities just as State and local governments now have the authority to do. I believe treating tribes as we do State governments makes good economic sense; it gives them an even greater sense of responsibility and destiny in controlling their own future. They should have that same ability just as State and local governments.

So for all those reasons I think those Indian reservation provisions in the JOBS bill, which are designated to help Indians, will help. It is not going to solve all the problems on reservations, but it will certainly give a little more help, a hope, a future to some very depressed parts of our country, and if we fulfill our obligations to help out, I think we will have done a lot through the provisions of the JOBS bill directed at reservations. There are many other provisions in the JOBS bill, obviously, but those directed toward Indian reservations will certainly help those folks. I thank all members of the committee and the chairman of the committee, Senator GRASSLEY, for including them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes. I know the majority leader wants to come as well. I certainly want to be courteous to him. I will try to finish in less than 15 minutes, but I ask unanimous consent to speak at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That order has been provided.

FOREST FUNDING

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss an issue that has enormous importance for the West and other parts of the country, and that is the funding, critically needed funding, to protect our forests.

I believe we are going to have an extraordinarily difficult time in the next few months coping with these forest fires that are causing such devastation in the West. I was part of a coalition, a member of the Budget Committee which saw the Senate accept unanimously by voice vote a measure that would fully fund essentially what we were trying to do, again on a bipartisan basis, in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

I come today because I have heard unofficially that possibly the amendment I authored and which was accepted unanimously in this Chamber is not going to make it out of the budget conference. I think this would be a grievous mistake given the reports we are getting now about the prospect of an extraordinarily difficult fire season.

The amendment I authored would increase the budget authority to boost investments in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to benefit our national forests, the environment, local communities, and local economies. My amendment would add \$343 million to last year's \$417 million for hazardous fuel reduction so as to be able to reach the \$716 million authorization in title I of the Healthy Forests legislation.

Now, we have talked a lot during this session about the importance of hazardous fire reduction projects. We have talked about it in the Budget and Appropriations Committees, in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, and my colleagues have heard me repeatedly talk about how important this funding would be. But every year these hazardous fuels projects go underfunded or unfunded, and that means another year with little or no warning thousands of people in fire-prone communities end up tossing everything they can into their cars and fleeing their homes without knowing if anything is going to remain when they return.

The Forest Service's inability to do all of the hazardous fuels reduction projects that needs to get done leads to real-life danger on the ground in these small western communities.

It leads to danger in the backyards of our citizens, in their recreation areas, and the places they gather in their communities.

Two years ago, in July of 2002, the Associated Press reported that 17,000 people faced evacuation in Oregon. Here is just a bit of this report:

Firefighters went door-to-door deciding which homes they could save (in Cave Junction, Oregon) as an explosive 68,000-acre wildfire nearby fed off heat, wind and timber.

These folks were evacuated, and a month later they were still evacuated. Another article from one of our publications, the Medford Mail Tribune, noted the very personal nature of the disruption. It said the Josephine County Sheriff's Office was beginning to reunite an estimated 400 evacuated animals, including livestock and even family pets, with evacuated owners.

The Associated Press, that same news outlet, reported just yesterday that an early fire season is expected in eastern Oregon. We are hearing about this all over the West. There are going to be lots of fires. They are going to be very early. They, in my view, are going to cause enormous pain and hardship for our communities.

I implore my colleagues, both in the Senate and in the other body, to protect what we have been able to do in a bipartisan kind of fashion, and that is

to properly and fully fund this critical aspect of the Healthy Forests legislation.

For years there has been this budgetary sleight of hand with respect to forest fires, where the Forest Service takes from one account and goes to another. When it is all done, it is clear there are not enough resources, and that is what I tried to change in the Healthy Forests legislation. We had bipartisan support. Senator DOMENICI, for example, has done yeoman's work on this for years and years. Senator CRAPO, another colleague in this body, has been so supportive of this effort.

I will take a few minutes to talk about what I think is ahead and why I hope that if the conference has not fully acted that we can protect that amendment to fully fund the effort to deal with this huge fire risk that we are facing.

Just yesterday, the San Francisco Chronicle reported:

California's fire season, off to an ominously early start, could be exacerbated by increasing numbers of dead trees, frozen funding for fuel-reduction projects and the implacable expansion of the suburbs into wildlands. Federal officials moved Wednesday to address one of those concerns, freeing \$240 million for removal of dead trees in San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, after Senator Feinstein complained about restrictions on the funds. Still, State and national officials say the trend in recent years of extremely destructive wildfires in California and throughout the West is likely to continue this season.

From the CBS Associated Press story entitled "Early Start For California Fires," which came from Corona, CA, on May 5, just days ago:

As acrid smoke for more than 18,000 acres of charred brush curled skyward, California officials feared the earlier-than-usual start of the summer wildfires season could make it the most dangerous ever. Just months after the most devastating wildfires in State history . . . thousands of acres from San Diego to Santa Barbara are ablaze. Thousands of firefighters are on the line, and once again residents are fleeing advancing flames.

The same day, the Associated Press said:

It's like gasoline. More than 1,000 people were evacuated in the northeastern Lake Elsinore area as the Cerrito Fire was whipped up by winds.

Tuesday, the Los Angeles Daily News:

It was the explosive end to the State's worst fire season, from which the region still hasn't recovered. And this year, authorities say, could be worse. Much, much worse.

To those thousands of folks across the country, particularly those whom I represent in Oregon who have been pounded by these devastating fires year after year, the bickering and the back and forth in Congress on fully funding forest health, this is not a theoretical thing to those Oregonians. It is not some kind of policy discussion. It is a danger to their families, a danger to their communities, every single day.

By working in a bipartisan fashion, after more than 25 years the Congress came together, passed a landmark